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NAZI USE OF FILMS IN PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE

22 February 1943

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SUMMARY

Since the beginning of National Socialism the Nazi leaders have recognized the power of the motion picture as a political instrument. By a large-scale organizational effort they have coordinated the work of the German film industry with the objectives of national policy by selection and training of special personnel; by the control of film production through banking credits, censorship and systematic propaganda directives; and by an energetic distribution program both at home and abroad. Despite the stultifying effects of totalitarian regimentation in the field of the arts, it cannot be denied that under the Nazi control the German film industry has produced some extremely effective films, from both the propagandistic and the artistic viewpoints. In sum, the Nazi have displayed great strength in their exploitation of the film as a weapon of psychological warfare.

NAZI USE OF FILMS
IN PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE

I. NAZI ESTIMATE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FILM AS A
PROPAGANDA WEAPON AND GENERAL PATTERN OF CONTROL

The Chief of the Film Division in Goebbels' Ministry of Propaganda, Fritz Hippler, has stated that the film is that form of art which has the most intensive effect on the largest mass audience. "Its images and effects are easily implanted in the minds of millions." ¹ The Propaganda Ministry has put a measure of effort into the organization of the German film which rivals their efforts in the field of broadcasting. Were it not for the fact that German films are barred from large areas of the globe where German broadcasts still penetrate, one might well argue, on the basis of official Nazi statements, that the film, not the radio broadcast, is the prime medium of Nazi propaganda, both at home and abroad. Recognizing its importance as a propaganda weapon, the Nazis early took measures to ensure their complete control over it.

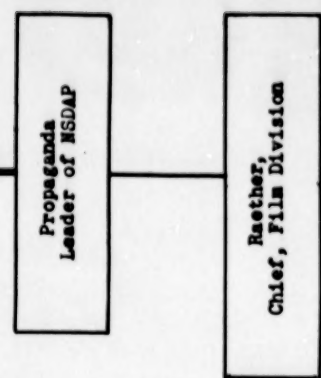
Official control over German films is carried out in three spheres: personnel, production, and distribution. The agencies involved are for the most part centered in the Propaganda Ministry and, within that Ministry, in the Film Division and the Reichsfilmkammer. Parallel with the Propaganda Ministry, a "State" agency, is the Propaganda Office of the Nazi Party, which also has a film Division of great importance in the domestic distribution program. Certain other governmental agencies, such as the Ministries of Education, War and Labor, have their own film offices which serve in a liaison capacity with the respective branches of the Propaganda Ministry and the Propaganda Office of the Nazi Party. Personal control of all film policy is centered in Goebbels, who is Minister of Propaganda in the State apparatus, Propaganda Leader in the Party, and President of the Kulturkammer in the Propaganda Ministry; this "Chamber of Culture" is a sort of holding company controlling the seven subordinate "chambers" for film, fine arts, theater, press, literature, music, and radio. His subordinates entrusted with motion picture affairs are Fritz Hippler, Chief of the "State" Film Division; Arnold Raether, Chief of the "Party" Film Division; and Carl Froelich, President of the Filmkammer. (In May 1941 Leopold Gutterer, Brigade Leader in the SS, was appointed "Secretary of State" in the Propaganda Ministry with jurisdiction over film, radio and certain other media.)²

1. "Jeder Film muss eine Moral Haben", Film-Kurier, 14 May 1941.

2. Kolnische Zeitung, 24 May 1941, No. 260, p. 2

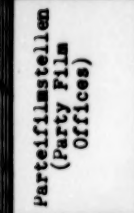
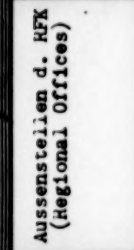
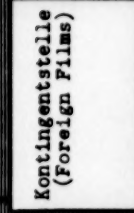
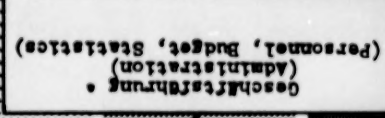
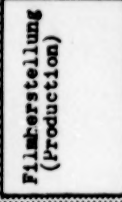
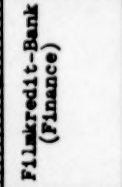
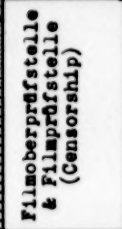
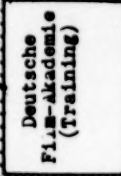
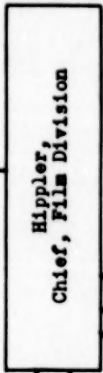
Goebbels

— STATE — *Goebbels* — PARTY —



P E R S O N N E L

P R O D U C T I O N



NAZI USE OF FILMS
IN PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE

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The Chief of the Film Division in Goebbels' Ministry of Propaganda, Fritz Hippler, has stated that the film is that form of art which has the most intensive effect on the largest mass audience. "Its images and effects are easily implanted in the minds of millions." ¹ The Propaganda Ministry has put a measure of effort into the organization of the German film which rivals their efforts in the field of broadcasting. Were it not for the fact that German films are barred from large areas of the globe where German broadcasts still penetrate, one might well argue, on the basis of official Nazi statements, that the film, not the radio broadcast, is the prime medium of Nazi propaganda, both at home and abroad. Recognizing its importance as a propaganda weapon, the Nazis early took measures to ensure their complete control over it.

Official control over German films is carried out in three spheres: personnel, production, and distribution. The agencies involved are for the most part centered in the Propaganda Ministry and, within that Ministry, in the Film Division and the Reichsfilmkammer. Parallel with the Propaganda Ministry, a "State" agency, is the Propaganda Office of the Nazi Party, which also has a film Division of great importance in the domestic distribution program. Certain other governmental agencies, such as the Ministries of Education, War and Labor, have their own film offices which serve in a liaison capacity with the respective branches of the Propaganda Ministry and the Propaganda Office of the Nazi Party. Personal control of all film policy is centered in Goebbels, who is Minister of Propaganda in the State apparatus, Propaganda Leader in the Party, and President of the Kulturkammer in the Propaganda Ministry; this "Chamber of Culture" is a sort of holding company controlling the seven subordinate "chambers" for film, fine arts, theater, press, literature, music, and radio. His subordinates entrusted with motion picture affairs are Fritz Hippler, Chief of the "State" Film Division; Arnold Raether, Chief of the "Party" Film Division; and Carl Froelich, President of the Filmkammer. (In May 1941 Leopold Gutterer, Brigade Leader in the SS, was appointed "Secretary of State" in the Propaganda Ministry with jurisdiction over film, radio and certain other media.)²

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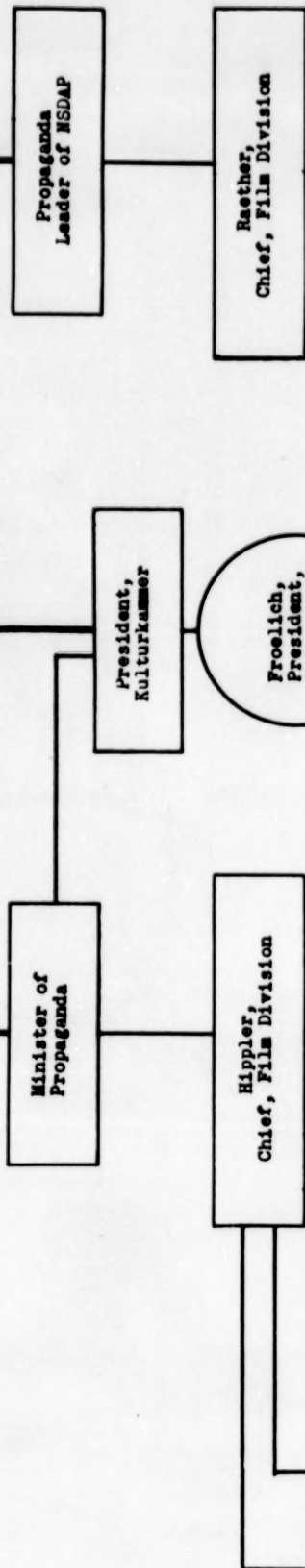
The accompanying diagram will indicate the relationships between controlling agencies and functions controlled, all under Goebbels' personal influence. The history of the German motion picture industry over the past decade is a record of progressive concentration of power in his hands. In 1929 there were over four hundred producing and three hundred distributing firms. Many of these failed during the depression -- no less than one hundred and fifty in the course of two years alone. With the coming of the Nazi regime in 1933, a further concentration took place. Yet in 1937 there were still seventy distributing firms and even more producers. At this point the State passed a measure prohibiting the establishment of new independent firms. The coalescence of producing companies continued until 1941, when a new reorganization reduced the remaining thirty odd firms to less than a dozen.

The final step was taken in February 1942, when all production of motion pictures was concentrated in the hands of seven producing companies (Bavaria, Terra, Tobis, Wien-Film, Berlin-Film, Prag-Film AG, and Ufa-Filmkunst GmbH), under a government sponsored holding company, called the Ufa-Film GmbH, with a capital of 65 million marks. The aim of this reorganization was to keep film production decentralized in the leading German studios -- in Berlin, Munich, Vienna, and Prague -- while stimulating competition between these firms, each of which was given a yearly quota of about twenty features. The domestic distribution of German feature films was even more centralized, under the Deutscher Filmvertrieb GmbH. Exhibition was still to be handled by the more than eight thousand independent motion picture theaters, which, with the exception of 156 Ufa theaters, were owned by different individuals.¹

¹ Suhr, Otto -- "Kraeftezusammenfassung in Film"
Der deutsche Volkswirt, 6 March 1942. (740-742)

Goebbels

— STATE — — PARTY —



P E R S O N N E L

P R O D U C T I O N

D I S T R I B U T I O N

Deutsche Film-Akademie (Training)

Wochenschau-zentrale (Newsreels)

Filmberprfrfstelle & Filmprfrfstelle (Censorship)

Filmkredit-Bank (Finance)

Filmherstellung (Production)

Kontingentsstelle (Foreign Films)

Werberat d. dt. Wirtschaft (Promotion)

Aussenstellen d. RFX (Regional Offices)

Parteifilmstellen (Party Film Offices)

Filmvertrieb (Distribution) a) domestic b) foreign

Filmverfhrung (Presentation)

Geschäftsführung Administration Personnel, Budget, Statistics

II. STATE CONTROL OF PERSONNEL IN THE GERMAN FILM INDUSTRY

A. The Reichsfilmkammer (RFK)

The preliminary law establishing the RFK (14 July 1933) made it clear that all persons participating in the production, distribution or presentation of films must belong to the RFK. An official announcement by the RFK on 19 October 1933, stated that films in the production of which non-members had participated would not be accepted at the Censorship Office, nor given to distributing agents, nor permitted in movie-theaters for presentation.

By these and other regulations the government was able to establish a stranglehold on the "private" film industries by the simple device of controlling personnel selection. Applicants for membership might be rejected if they were not (a) technically qualified, (b) politically reliable, and (c) Aryan. The last requirement applied to the applicant's spouse as well.¹

B. The Deutsche Film-Akademie

More important in the long run than this veto power on present personnel is the existence of an ambitious training institution, attendance at which has become a prerequisite for future membership in the RFK. Established by a Decree of the Fuhrer of 18 March 1938, the German Film Academy has an elaborate curriculum covering the artistic, technical, and economic aspects of the film industry, each of which is studied in a separate "Faculty".²

The number of students admitted to the Film Academy in any one year is established by a numerus clausus based on calculated employment possibilities in the German film industry. The aim of the instruction, which extends over two years, is to combine technical training with cultural, ideological, and psychological orientation. Courses preliminary to those in the Art, Technical or Economic Faculties, for example, include eleven general political and historical courses as well as courses on film-history, film-propaganda, film audience analysis, types of films at home and abroad, and similar topics.

Students in the Art Faculty begin with general courses on literature, music, the relations between the film and other arts, and comparative national psychology. They then go on to the technical aspects of acting, stage-craft, and histrionics. The Art Faculty is divided into three special fields: Performance, Plastic Arts, and Dramaturgy. Work in the Technical Faculty covers the technological

1 Sec. 10, 1st supplement to the Reichskulturkammer Law, 1 November 1933 (Jahrbuch der Reichsfilmkammer,) 1937 p. 194

2 The following information is taken from a prospectus, Deutsche Film-Akademie, printed March 1938.

side of film production and presentation, while the Economic Faculty comprises training in film production management, film law, film distribution, theater management, and film advertising. Students in this Faculty are given a comprehensive picture of international competition in the field of film production and of the practical problems confronting German film export. Successful foreign films are analyzed in order to determine the secret of their success. Another course takes up "The Psychology and Statistics of Movie Attendance."

Attached to the Film Academy is an Educational Film Institute (Arbeitsinstitut für Kulturfilmschaffen), which trains personnel for producing research films, industrial films, instructional films, and films classified as "volksbildend" -- suitable for use in adult education work.

Training in the Film Academy thus comprises far more than mere technical preparation to be an actor, a producer or a film technician. Every graduate is at the same time to some extent qualified as a propaganda analyst and publicist. This breadth of training has considerable bearing on the proficiency the Germans have shown in the development of film exports in the Propaganda Companies of the Armed Forces, personnel for which is selected from among graduates of the Film Academy.

III. NAZI CONTROL OF PRODUCTION IN THE GERMAN FILM INDUSTRY.

The production of films is controlled not only by a water-tight personnel selection policy but also by the granting or withholding of financial credits and by the veto-power of the censor. All film scripts must be approved by the Prüfstelle or the Oberprüfstelle (the two Censorship offices) before production can begin and before application for credits to the Film Credit Bank can be made.

A. Censorship

The Film Censorship can control the content of films in two ways, negatively and positively. On the negative side a film may be suppressed if it contains elements proscribed by the official censorship law, which reads:

A film is to be banned if official inspection reveals that its presentation is likely to jeopardize vital state interests or public order and security; to injure National Socialist, religious, moral or artistic sentiments; to exert a vulgarizing or demoralizing effect on the audience; or to endanger German prestige or the relations between Germany and foreign states.¹

From the positive point of view the Censorship Office may provide a film with one of the following official "labels":²

staatspolitisch besonders wertvoll: especially valuable from the political point of view.

kunstlerisch besonders wertvoll: especially valuable from the artistic point of view.

staatspolitisch wertvoll: valuable from the political point of view.

kunstlerisch wertvoll: valuable from the artistic point of view.

kulturell wertvoll: valuable from the cultural point of view.

vollstuenlich wertvoll: valuable from the popular point of view.

anerkanntenswert: worthy of special mention.

volksbildend: useful for popular education.

These labels are incorporated in the promotional material used to advertise the film and are probably of some commercial value. They are sometimes combined. The highest citation, "staatspolitisch und

1 Lichtspielgesetz, 16 February 1934, Section 7.

2 Frankfurter Zeitung, 11 September 1942.

kunstlerisch besonders wertvoll" was given to only two films in 1937: "Der Herrscher", and "Urlaub auf Ehrenwort."¹ This official distinction between "political" and "artistic" films makes it to some extent possible to distinguish between political and non-political motivations in the minds of the German movie producers.

B. Production and Importation of Films

Various types of films are produced in Germany in addition to the usual "features" (Spielfilme): "short-features", "culture films", "instructional films", "advertising films". Equivalent types of foreign films are imported. A considerable number are produced, and some imported, on "narrow" film (16 mm., 8 mm.). In 1934, for example, the following types of films were licensed in Germany:

	<u>Domestic</u>	<u>Foreign</u>
Long Features	129	82
Short Features	55	17
Non-Features	1836	170
(Long	37	
Incl. (Short	1380	
(16 mm.	419	22
TOTAL	2020	291
GRAND TOTAL	2311	

The category of "advertising films" (Werbefilme) forms about 70 percent of the 1380 short non-features of domestic origin; there were also a very few long advertising films.²

Definite changes in the distribution of film types offered in the German market have taken place since the coming of the Nazi regime. As in the field of culture in general, the Nazis have curtailed foreign influences. They have also reduced domestic production of features and abolished two-feature programs. They appear, however, at least up to the outbreak of the war, to have increased the domestic production of non-features and short features, and to have reduced non-feature imports relatively little as compared with feature imports. The following figures represent averages for 1923-29, as a pre-Nazi sample, and, 1933-38 (or estimates based on 1933-36 or 1933-37, as a post-Nazi sample:

1. Jahrbuch d. LFK, 1938, p. 39.
2. Jahrbuch fur Filmwerbung, 1936, pp. 81-85.

	DOMESTIC		FOREIGN			
	Features		Features		Non-Features	
	long	short	long	short		
Pre-Nazi	217	26	1499	247	325	134
Post-Nazi	107	c.64	C.1714	81	C.18	c.122

The striking reduction in the number of foreign long features shown in Germany reflects a deliberate Nazi policy, limiting import of foreign features to 50 percent of all features shown in any given year (by the so-called Kontingentbestimmungen).¹ Between 1933 and 1938 foreign features amounted to 42.4 percent of total feature offerings, slightly more than one-half of which were American. Out of 159 long features shown in Germany in 1938, 62.3 percent were German, 21.4 percent American, and 16.3 percent other foreign.² The following table shows the countries from which Germany imported films in 1937 and the number imported from each:

United States.....	39
Austria.....	14
France.....	8
Czechoslovakia.....	5
Italy.....	3
Hungary.....	3
Great Britain.....	2
Poland.....	2
Japan.....	1
Sweden.....	1
Total	78 ³

By this restriction on foreign film imports Germany joined the small group of nations (Japan, United States, Germany, and probably Russia) which satisfy more than half their demand for films from domestic production; in 1937 Great Britain supplied only 23 percent of its own films, France 26 percent, Italy 12 percent.

- 1 The relevant legislation is listed in the Filmhandbuch, Teil III, C.
- 2 Wochenberichte d. Inst. f. Konjunkturforschung, 18 January 1939, p. 13.
- 3 Jahrbuch d. RFA, 1938, pp. 210-214.

In terms of feature film production, Germany ranks behind Japan, the United States, Great Britain, and (until 1940) France; ahead of Italy, Czechoslovakia, and Poland. (Figures for the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics have not been found.) In the year 1932, for example, the following figures represent output in long feature films by the leading producing countries:

Japan.....	514
United States.....	492
France.....	157
Great Britain.....	156
Germany.....	130
Italy.....	30
Czechoslovakia.....	26
Poland.....	24
Total.....	1529 ¹

C. Nazi Film Production Policy

The production aims of Goebbels and his staff in the Propaganda Ministry and in the Filmkammer have been fairly clearly stated in a variety of official declarations. One of the most revealing discussions of the subject is a series of ten articles by Fritz Hippler, Chief of the Film Division in the Propaganda Ministry, on "Problems of Film Composition", which appeared serially in the Film-Kurier, 5-14 May 1941. The last of these articles summarized the argument under the title: "Every Film Must Have a Moral"

Every film must be so constructed, wrote Hippler, that the person who has seen it will realize "why" it was produced. The moral must not be too obvious, of course, and need not be old-fashioned. But the audience must be "taught" something. "No absolutely purposeless art should be created," and the film has an extraordinary power, superior to that of all the other arts, to shape attitudes and patterns of living. Even a pure comedy, which keeps the audience laughing for an hour and a half, can be a very serious affair -- not in its content, but in its effect.

What specifically can a film accomplish in the formation of attitudes? In the first place, wrote Hippler, undesirable attitudes can be undermined by ridicule. Intellectualism, shabbiness, egoism, individualism, avarice, conceit, envy, narrow-mindedness, and other undesirable traits should be "neutralized" or "negativized" by being exposed in comical situations. Killing undesirable traits or attitudes in dialogue alone is not enough; the logic of the plot must place their proponents in an inevitably ridiculous or otherwise unenviable position.

¹ Figure for Japan from U.S. Consular Reports on Foreign Movie Markets; other figures from Statistisches Jahrbuch, 1935, p. 83.

In general, the spectator must be able to know clearly, though perhaps unconsciously, which characters and traits he is supposed to love and admire and which he is to hate and despise. Films can frequently use the "black-on-white" technique of the cartoon to good advantage. Jews should be contrasted with Aryan Germans. The English, another negative symbol, should be set against good Germans, not against Jews, since in the latter case the two negatives would tend to blend with one another. Criminals must be consistently negativized, not shown in a sentimental or favorable light, in, say, their home life. Ideas which are positive symbols -- like the Hereditary Homestead Law -- must be represented by characters who are also positive symbols, so that the educative "message" will not be confused. The black-on-white technique should be used, however, only where it is desired to establish clear demarcation in audience attitudes. A film contrasting the virtuous rustic with the slippery city-slicker would not, for example, further the national interest.

Since the film spectator is highly suggestible, especially if he is made to "enjoy" the experience, he readily identifies himself with the hero and rejects the villain. Actresses who play positive feminine roles should realize that millions of women in their audiences will model their behavior on that of the revered heroine. They will tend to do this in the way they dress, talk, and behave, and as mothers, wives, daughters and sweethearts. Family life, therefore, should not always be shown as disorganized and full of nervous tensions; nor should it be always outside the experience of the average movie-goer, as in films about the wealthy or the aristocratic. A good film should not fear to represent "normal" life without too many crises and dramatic "events".

Above all, films must be lebensbejahend, that is, they must reinforce positive attitudes toward life, work and the future. For this reason certain foreign films -- like "La Grande Illusion", which aims to show the futility of war -- may not be shown to the German public. (Even the German Republic, it will be recalled, banned "All Quiet on the Western Front" for the same reason.)

It is thus clear from Hippler's statement that the Nazis aim to elevate the film to the status of the Greek drama or the medieval morality play as a publicly sponsored formative influence on the behavior and attitudes of the people. A close study of a considerable number of German films¹ produced under this directive reveals that, as a matter of fact, every film does have a moral, but that its prominence varies greatly from film to film. At one extreme stands a film like "Hitlerjunge Quex", where the moral is deliberately pushed by the producer, consciously felt by the spectator, permeates the whole film, and represents a definitely "reformist" point of view from the standpoint of a large portion of the audiences. At the other extreme stands a film like "Es war eine

1 In collaboration with the Pictorial Records Division of OSS, the Museum of Modern Art Film Library, and the Army Film Laboratory.

rauschende Ballnacht", which depicts an imaged episode in Tchaikovsky's love-life, where the only discernible "moral" elements are generally accepted ideals such as devotion to creative work, loyalty to one's beloved, and elevation of artistic over mercenary values, -- ideals which are so widely accepted that most spectators would probably be unconscious of the fact that they were being "educated", and even the producer may have been unaware of "educating". In this case the motive was probably to make an attractive, commercially successful film, modeled perhaps on Greta Garbo's "Anna Karenina", "with no thought but to entertain". The psychological significance of the film lies mainly in its recreatory and inspirational effect stressing Tchaikovsky's music and Zarah Leander's acting, rather than in the formation of attitudes.

The "Robert Koch" film, to take another example, by heroizing Koch tends to impress a whole series of traits of the hero upon the audience as being admirable and worthy of emulation: firmness of faith, unflagging industry through years of frustration, devotion to a noble cause (medicine), persistence despite persecution, working alone or with few collaborators if others will not help, glory of martyrdom, being a revolutionary against moribund traditions. The film also "boosts" male leadership and female subordination, sun and air, health, inductive research. Other persons, groups, institutions or symbols are portrayed in such a way that the audience is supposed to dislike them: bigotry, sectarianism, medical quacks, reaction in higher education and professional circles, bureaucrats, unenlightened villagers. There is, furthermore, a subtle implication of parallelism between the careers of Robert Koch and Adolf Hitler.

One simple but effective device to point the moral of a film is the use of a telling word or phrase in the final fade-out. A comedy laid in a Bavarian village, which exalts the marriage tie, ("Der Ehestreik" ends with a fade-out of the appropriate "motto" over the door of the village inn -- "Es lebe das Brautpaar". A documentary glorifying the heroic deaths of Party Martyrs ("Für Uns") ends with a view of the inscription on the Munich Holdendenmal: "Und sie haben doch gesiegt". The official film reviews often reveal the "moral" of a film as well. "Urlaub auf Ehrenwort", already referred to as one of the two 1937 films singled out for the highest possible official recognition, was succinctly described in one of the trade journals as "a film which saves the honor and reputation (die filmische Ehrenrettung) of the German world War front-soldier".¹

As an example of how an ostensibly innocuous "culture film" on the habits of canary birds can be used as a means of inculcating domestic virtues a detailed commentary may be given of "Kanarien" (1940). This 2-reel short was officially described as "volksbildend, Lehrfilm, jugend- und feiertagsfrei" (useful for popular education, instructional, open to juvenile, and free to be shown on holidays) by

1. Licht-Bild-Buchne, 24 February 1940.

the censorship office; and the review in the Licht-Bild-Buehne (17 May 1940) supports the impression that in this film the canary world is deliberately presented as a microcosm of National Socialist Utopia.

The commentary is given by a woman whose voice expresses the typical accents of a virtuous German Hausfrau. We first see the birds in their native Canary Islands and then how they are bred in a village in the Harz Mountains, in Germany. The following points may be particularly noted:

1. A bird which fights with other birds in a cage is identified as a "troublemaker" (Stoerenfried) and is promptly evicted by the keeper. The commentary states that troublemakers must be removed and isolated so that they do not disturb the rest of society.
2. Tender relations between the father and mother bird are shown and commented upon approvingly.
3. The virtuous activities of some birds who build nests and prepare for having their young are contrasted with the lazy habits of others.
4. The actual mating of the birds is referred to as "marriage" and the eggs are then pictured as being the "successful result" of the marriage.
5. The parent birds are shown singing "love songs" over the newly hatched eggs.
6. The parent bird who brings food to his children is referred to as a good husband (ein guter Gatte).
7. The domestic virtues of cleanliness, neatness, industriousness, and good humor are specifically noted.
8. A threat to this scene of domestic bliss, in the form of a rat, penetrates the cage and eats some of the eggs. The society is rescued by the wise precautions of the keeper (the Fuehrer?) who sets a trap and catches the rat.
9. Perhaps the most insignificant scenes now follow. They are concerned with the training of the young. At an early age the young canaries are put in separate cages where they are exposed to the sound of a mechanical pipe which is supposed to teach them how to sing. This training is referred to as Gesangsunterricht and seems to parallel the organization of State education away from the home which characterizes the Nazi society. Careful records are kept of the differential advances made by the young canaries in learning how to sing. Two particularly virtuous "pupils" are shown with the comment, "Here are two who have learned their lesson well." They receive a reward in the form of special

rations. Eventually the best ones are sold all over the world; but not until a Gau competition between all the young canaries in the area is held. The final picture of the film shows the "Gausieger" who wins the prize. The closing of the film on this note seems to point the moral: if you only do what you are supposed to do as a virtuous young canary, you will end up with the most desirable of all rewards namely recognition by the NSDAP.

IV. PROPAGANDAKOMPANIEN (PK)¹

Any discussion of German film production policy would be incomplete without some mention of the so-called "Propaganda Companies" in the armed forces. These military groups are composed of experts in the fields of journalism, radio, film and graphic arts. They have three distinct functions: in collaboration with the "Propaganda Battalions" they implement combat propaganda toward the enemy and enemy civilians in the combat zone; they entertain and instruct the troops; and they report on military developments to the home front, to training units, and to the staff. A fourth function is connected with the Nazi aim of dazzling the world with German power, efficiency and invincibility; but with the vanishing of the Blitzkrieg era, this fourth function has disappeared.

The Propaganda Companies were developed as a result of a study of the last war and a realization of the desirability of improving the communication of first-hand battle experience to new recruits, inactive units, and civilians. Verbal reports alone could never equal the intense effect of a good film. Nor could even the best military instructor duplicate the educational value of a front-line newsreel. Whereas in the World War the Military in general looked down on the civilian public, the Nazis realized the need of binding the home front with the Wehrmacht.

One incidental function of the Propaganda Companies is that of putting the troops constantly on their mettle, for the camera eye can always report their behavior to distant superior officers and even Hitler himself, who is reputed to spend hours every week examining film reports from the front. Since every unit is likely to be visited by a PK camera man at any moment, this morale-building function is not to be under-estimated.

The Propaganda Companies are backed by the highest authority and are superior, if need be, to the local officer in command. They are responsible only to GHQ. They operate under the G-2 of the field army, which gives them directives, supervises security, manages the pickup and delivery service, and handles special requests. So efficient is this organization that Berlin theaters were showing newsreels of the Russian campaign within twenty-four hours after it began.

1. J. Garrett Underhill, "PK", Infantry Journal, December 1942, pages 50-57.

V. DISTRIBUTION OF GERMAN FILMS

The effort put into film distribution, both at home and abroad, indicates the importance attached by the Nazis to this instrument of public opinion formation. In sending the products of the German film industry into other countries the Nazis probably have a double aim: where possible, to swing attitudes in favor of German and Nazi viewpoints; where impossible to propagandize, at least to make money and supplement domestic returns on production costs. So far as is known no films are made exclusively for export, although some documentaries and newsreels are obviously edited for various foreign markets.

A. Domestic Market

In 1934, when Nazi efforts to increase the number of moviegoers in Germany had just begun, the weekly movie attendance was 5.7 million. This figure placed Germany ahead of Italy, with 5 million; Japan with 3 million; and Russia, with 1.7 million; but behind France with 6.7 million; Great Britain, with 19 million; and far behind the United States with 42 million. By 1938-9 the total German yearly movie audience was 442 million. This was 203 million larger than 1932-3, but only 89 million larger than the last pre-depression year, 1928-9. The domestic market was still far from the "saturation point" by 1938-9, judged by American standards, with an estimated weekly attendance of 7.9 million. Seating capacity was being used to only about 33 percent. In some localities phenomenal increases in attendance occurred: in Frankfurt am Main, (pop. 550,000 in 1935) from 1,700,000 to 2,500,000 between 1936 and 1941; Solingen, (pop. 140,500 in 1935) from 790,000 to almost 2,000,000 between 1932 and 1940.¹

The following figures for Berlin alone indicate the boost given to movie attendance by the war:²

1938	67,000,000
1940	90,244,207
1941	88,200,000
1942	102,000,000

The number of movie theaters increased from about 4500 in 1933 to almost 6700 in 1938 and 8000 in 1942, including 870 in former Austria and 350 in the former Sudeten territory. This makes Germany

1. Jahrbuch fuer deutsche Filmwerbung, 1936; Wochenbericht des Instituts fuer Konjunkturforschung, March 1939, No. 10, P.60; United States Department of Commerce, Motion Picture Division, Special Report No. 75, Berlin 4 December 1939; Film-Kurier, 3 June 1941.

2. Figures for 1938 and 1940 from Film-Kurier, 5 April 1941; for 1941-2 estimated from figures from the first 6 months, (Neue Zuercher Ztg., 19 August 1942).

the "first" movie-theater country in Europe, and in the world at large second only to the United States. (Information is not available for the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics).

The propaganda purpose behind this boosting of movie-attendance can be understood only in terms of the deliberate production policy discussed above and in terms of certain legislation governing distribution practice. A law of 17 July 1934, for example, stated that every feature picture should be accompanied by a "Culture Film" of at least 250 meters in length and that the Culture Film be advertised together with the feature.¹ This ruling was later modified to permit the showing of longer war newsreels the character of which is well known.² During the showing of war newsreels no seat-taking is allowed, and an almost ritual atmosphere is encouraged by lighting the theater for several minutes beforehand, and in other ways. Culture films on foreign countries constitute a kind of hybrid with the newsreels, but do not stress current developments so much as manners, customs and scenery. In the spring of 1941, for example, there were shown two German shorts based on the beauties of Japanese landscape.

In the school year 1941 a total of 70,740 prints of educational films were made available for the first time. These were distributed by some thousand district offices of the Reichsanstalt fur Film und Bild in Wissenschaft und Unterricht. The total library available of educational films amounted, with the addition of 1940-41 quota, to 350,084 prints during one school year (1940-41), or an average of 3.5 films daily for the 40-week period. School teachers were issued more than 10,000,000 pamphlets describing the content of the educational films.³

By far the most impressive evidence on the importance attributed by the Nazis to the movies is the net-work of film promotional activities organized under the Film Division of the Party Propaganda Office, set up as early as 1931 under Arnold Raether, who was still its chief ten years later. Under Raether's control are the 40 Gau Film Locals (Gaufilmstellen), and some 30,000 Party Film Leaders (Filmstellenleiter), whose business it is to display films of all kinds in areas where no movie-theater is available. It is estimated in 1938 that only 2,640 of Germany's 51,000 population centers (Gemeinden) had movie-theaters and that therefore some 21 million Germans had no local "movie-house".⁴ In 1938 there were 400 Party "movie-trucks", equipped to carry all apparatus necessary to display films, which travelled constantly from one village to another arranging Dorffilmabende,

1 Jahrbuch fur Filmwerbung, 1936, p. 123.

2 Psychology Division Report No. 19, 19 March 1942: "Design of Propaganda in German Foreign Newsreels." Licht-Bild-Buehne, 22 May 1942.

3 Film-Kurier, 19 May 1941.

4 Jahrbuch der RFK, 1938, p. 120.

at which the latest and most "volksbildende" features and shorts were shown. The Party Youth Film Office (Hauptstelle Jugendfilm, Reichspropagandaleitung der NSDAP) confers the special label "jugendwert" on films which it thinks especially valuable for German youth and occasionally produces special films of its own. One of these, "Der Marsch zum Führer", depicts the annual trek of the Hitler Youth to the fortress where Hitler was incarcerated 1923-4; it was cut down to 1500 meters from an original 40,000 taken by cameramen who accompanied the boys on their two week march.¹ The large scope of the Party work in film promotion is shown in the following figures for 1938:

	<u>Performances</u>	<u>Spectators</u>
Adult	109,038	20,490,310
School Children	65,577	13,985,429
Hitler Youth	c. 5,000	c. 3,000,000
TOTAL	179,615	37,475,739

By 1939 this figure had risen to 44 million. By 1940 the number of Party movie trucks had increased to 1000, the number of performances to 243,000 and of spectators to 50,000,000. In 1941 there were 1143 trucks, and 92,000,000 spectators. Millions of soldiers in the Wehrmacht were shown films through the efforts of the Party Film Offices: 5.4 million in 1939, 19.8 million in 1940. In fact, the demands of the Armed Forces greatly increased the demand for copies of films: 1,100 copies of features for civilian audiences in 1940, but 2,876 for the armed forces; 7,286 copies of newsreels for civilians, but 13,500 for the soldiers and sailors.² Since the outbreak of war women have to a considerable extent replaced men as truck drivers and operators of these Party-sponsored film programs.³

B. Foreign Market

In the year 1941, at the end of which Germany declared war on the United States, 168 different German feature films and 117 shorts were shown in this country. They were not particularly successful from a financial point of view, since but 14 movie theaters, mostly small ones in German-American communities, were available for showings of German films. It is evident, however, that Germany was desperately interested in securing film audiences in this country.⁴ An article in the official film trade journal early in 1940 expressed

1 Licht-Bild-Buchne, 7 February 1940.

2 Cf. "Die Filmarbeit der NSDAP", Film-Kurier, 29 May 1941.

3 "Die Frau in Tonfilmwagen", Film-Kurier, 16 May 1941. Cf. ibid., 10 May 1941. On the army programs see "Film und truppenbetreuung", 16 May 1941.

4 Date from files of Ufa Films Inc., New York

annoyance over the fact that only one German film was being shown in the United States for every 40 United States films shown in Germany.¹

No figures have been discovered to indicate the total extent of German export of feature films, but the following table shows the scope of Germany's efforts in the international distribution of 200 selected Culture Films:²

Switzerland.....	170	Bolivia.....	56
Austria.....	169	Sweden.....	54
Czechoslovakia.....	151	Norway.....	45
Holland.....	142	Finland.....	37
Hungary.....	129	Japan.....	37
Jugoslavia.....	115	Central America.....	37
Belgium.....	100	Rumania.....	35
France.....	87	Australia.....	34
United States.....	84	Greece.....	32
Spain.....	75	Poland.....	30
Brazil.....	69	England.....	30
Portugal.....	64	British South Africa.....	30
Mexico.....	64	Turkey.....	29
Denmark.....	61	China.....	26
Syria.....	59	Baltic States.....	24
Egypt.....	59	Netherlands East Indies.....	18
Uruguay.....	58	Bulgaria.....	17
Argentina.....	58	Columbia.....	14
Paraguay.....	57	British India.....	9
Chile.....	56	Venezuela.....	5
Peru.....	56	Siebenburgen.....	3

(German area in Roumania around Cluj)

Germany exported a total of 315 advertising films in 1940:³

Jugoslavia.....	66
Netherlands.....	37
Denmark.....	28
Rumania.....	28
Bulgaria.....	25

In European countries where Germany is now trying to establish "the New Order" German films have forced out American films where

1 Licht-Bild-Buehne, 13 February 1940.

2 From "Arbeitsinstitut fur Kulturfilmschaffen", a prospectus, printed March 1938. It is not clear whether these figures represent total distribution to date (1936) or within one year, probably 1936.

3 Germany, Film-Kurier, 10 April 1941.

German police powers are at work, as for example in Norway, Belgium, Holland and France; but where the market is still "open", for example in Sweden, American films are more popular than German ones, as the following figures suggest:

	German Films in Sweden	U.S. Films in Sweden
1939/40	10	135
1940/41	34	156 ¹

Of 28 new feature films released in Sweden during October 1941, 16 were American, 4 Swedish, 4 German, 3 British and 1 Hungarian.² In September 1942 American films were reported to amount to 90 percent of the total screen coverage in Sweden, which was using 60 prints of every newsreel alone.

Despite the fact that Ufa, one of the largest German film producing firms, had until the outbreak of war seven officers of its own and twenty-four regular representatives in other countries,³ Germany steadily lost its foreign market with the coming of the Nazis. In 1928 Germany had an export surplus from films alone of 19 million marks. Even in 1932 the German film industry was able to recoup 30 percent to 40 percent of its production costs from foreign receipts. But for the period 1934-7 the percentage of foreign receipts had sunk to an average of less than 17 percent, reaching a low of 12 percent in 1935-6. Furthermore, the loss in foreign receipts was not balanced by increased intake from the domestic market.⁴

Denmark, technically "occupied", presents the most striking evidence of the continued popularity of non-German, especially American films, even though the latter are necessarily years old. A Danish paper in mid-1942 carried advertisements for 47 cinemas in Copenhagen. The displays reveal that 29 American films, 9 Danish films and 8 Swedish films were being shown. Not a single cinema advertised a German film. The 47th cinema "They Never Came Back," was either British or American (1932).⁵

1 Film-Kurier, 24 May 1941. See there also the statements made by Leif Sinding, N. -S. Film Coordinator for Norway, to a correspondent of the Danish Nazi paper Faedrelandet.

2 U.S. Commercial Attache Stockholm, 22 Nov. 1941 (OSS-7896-F)

3 Handbuch der Deutschen Aktiengesellschaften, 1939, p. 619.

4 Fritz Langenscheidt, "Der deutsche Filmexport", Jahrbuch d. RPK, 1937, 122-5.

5 FREE DENMARK (The Monthly English Supplement of Frit Danmark). London, September 1942. p. 8.

Even Switzerland, with its very large German-speaking population, showed only one German film out of every four in 1939, giving preference to American films.¹

By contrast, Slovakia was required to sign an agreement with Germany in 1940 to show at least 50 percent German films, since Slovakia lay "in the sphere of influence of the German film."² Slovakia imported a total of 220 films in 1940, including 138 features and 82 shorts. Ninety-four out of the 138 features were German, 72 out of 82 shorts. Twelve out of the total 220 were Italian. The most successful German films were "Sieg im Westen" and "Ohm Krueger."³ Apparently a similar arrangement prevailed in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, which, in the first four months of 1940, imported 46 feature films, 25 of them German.⁴

While the Germans are inclined to attribute this loss of the foreign film market chiefly to political boycott fomented by enemies of the Third Reich -- principally the "Hollywood Jews" -- they are also carefully taking stock of their own production standards and anxiously asking why American films are always so popular. Since 1939 the war situation has given them an advantage in competition with the United States, although this advantage is now limited almost entirely to European countries allied with or occupied by Germany.

To facilitate German conquest of the European film market an elaborate archive of international film statistics was set up under the auspices of "International Film Chamber" early in 1939.⁵

Froelich, President of the Film Chamber, stated in November 1941 that Germany aimed to eliminate American films from Europe "for all time to come".⁶

There appears to be a general agreement, on the part of RFK officials, that Germany cannot attempt to produce films -- features, at any rate -- for specific foreign markets exclusively. German

1 Licht-Bild-Buehne, 7 February 1940.

2 ibid., 20 January 1940.

3 GERMANY, Annual Report of Nastup Film A. G. (U.S. Embassy Berlin to State, No. 2608, 16 June 1941.)

4 ibid., 21 May 1940

5 Lage und Aufgabe der Filmwirtschaft in Grossdeutschland; Wochenberichte d. Inst. f. Konjunkturforschung, 19 Jan 1939, p. 13.

6 Dienst aus Deutschland 11 November 1941.

films must be true to German traditions and not weakly attempt to ape or cater to foreign mentalities.¹

German statisticians have attempted to prove that the success of a film depends not on the mentality of the audience, but on the inherent excellence of the film as a work of cinematographic art. Figures for 1936-37 and 1937-38 show that well over 90 percent of all films exported by one large firm (Tobis) were successes or failures irrespective of audience; if they were "hits" in Germany, they were "hits" abroad, and if they were "flops" in Germany they were "flops" abroad. These data are cited by Wilhelm Meydam, in an address on "World and Film" delivered before the annual meeting of the Foreign Trade Division of the RFK, March 1939, in order to show that the German film producer may, on the whole, neglect the problem of "national preferences" in considering a film for export.

It is furthermore generally agreed that films depending for their appeal on local German customs and dialects should never be exported and should never be produced with an expectation of financial returns from the foreign market. The same considerations apply to some extent to explicitly "Nazi" films, like those concerned with Party history. Care should also be taken, it is recognized, not to offend local sentiments in countries where films are to be shown, though the export of certain German films in wartime can scarcely take this stricture too seriously, since at such times purely commercial considerations must yield to political strategy. Exportable films, it is held, will in general be those which appeal because of their music, action, and technical or aesthetic superiority, rather than dialogue, since the foreigner for the most part misses the linguistic nuances, and dubbing in foreign languages is expensive.

That the German film industry will find it difficult to supply the market it has so eagerly claimed is freely conceded in an article in the Frankfurter Zeitung of 22 April 1942. The principal bottlenecks are in the construction of new studios and sets.

A still greater problem will confront the Nazi newsreel makers as the "news" they present loses more and more of the Blitzkrieg magic. Since German newsreels have differed conspicuously from British, Russian, and American newsreels in their concealment of unpleasant facts, it will be more and more difficult for the Nazi Propaganda Companies to provide the footage desired by the Propaganda Ministry.

¹ See the strong injunction to this effect by E. H. Correll, Jahrbuch d. RFK, 1938, pp. 100-101.

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